



MBTA Station Staffing Policy

April 2026

Purpose

The MBTA recognizes that assistance is essential for many riders to utilize public transit. Dedicated, in-station staff whose primary role is customer service, are vital to providing safe, clean, accessible service to all. These staff assist riders with wayfinding, fare vending machine and faregate transactions, boarding and alighting vehicles, navigating the system, and more. They also play an essential role in ensuring the cleanliness and availability of elevators and escalators, the safety of stations, and the functionality of equipment.

Other MBTA staff, such as Station Officials, Platform Attendants, and Motorpersons, are also trained to assist riders and remain alert for safety and operational issues and accessibility concerns. But while these staff often provide assistance, their locations vary throughout the system and day, and their roles extend beyond customer service to include a myriad of operational duties.

Therefore, the MBTA has established minimum standards for dedicated in-station customer service staffing.

Staffing Standards

The minimum staffing coverage for all Tier I locations shall be Monday through Saturday from 6:00 AM to 12:00 AM, and on Sunday from 7:00 AM to 12:00 AM.

At least 50% of Tier II locations shall be staffed at minimum from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM every day. The remaining Tier II locations do not have minimum staffing coverage for dedicated in-station personnel.

Locations that are not assigned a tier do not have dedicated MBTA station staff assigned to them on a regular basis, but may be assigned staff for special events, during service disruptions, and in emergency circumstances.

Assignment of Tiers

To determine where in-station customer service personnel are needed, and at what coverage standard, all heavy rail, light rail, and bus rapid transit stations are evaluated using a set of criteria designed to anticipate the demand for rider assistance. This evaluation determines the tier level for each specific location within each station where staffing is required.

The following criteria and procedure are used to determine whether a station is assigned a staffing location:

- 1) Each station is evaluated to determine if it will receive staffing. Stations will have at least one location assigned to a staffing Tier if they meet any of the following criteria:
 - a) Gated entries in top 50% system-wide
 - b) Contain an elevator
 - c) Have historically been assigned dedicated in-station staff¹
 - d) Documented, ongoing, concerns regarding safety, cleanliness impacting station usability, and/or accessibility received from riders, Operations, Customer & Employee Experience, System-Wide Accessibility, or Safety

- 2) Stations are then evaluated to determine if more than one unique location at the station will require staffing. Stations that meet any of the following criteria will have more than one unique location identified and assigned to a staffing tier:
 - a) Serve multiple subway lines
 - b) Have complex layouts with multiple head houses and/or platforms that require exiting the paid fare area to travel between

The following criteria and procedure are used to assign locations to staffing tiers:

- 1) All locations in stations that meet any of these criteria are assigned to Tier II:
 - a) Inaccessible stations
 - b) Stations without elevators
 - c) Stations that do not provide rail service
 - d) Stations without fare gates
- 2) Otherwise, at least one location at each station is assigned to Tier I. This location is typically the primary entrance or lobby of the station.
- 3) For stations with multiple staffed locations, secondary locations may be assigned a lower tier level. Secondary locations may be assigned to Tier II if:
 - a) The accessible entry at the location has a redundant alternative path of travel available that does not require navigating steep slopes, or exiting a paid area to utilize
 - b) The location has significantly lower utilization among riders than the primary location
 - c) Dedicated in-station staff from other locations at the station can access the secondary location without leaving the paid fare area of the station

¹Defined as stations that were staffed with Customer Service Agents as of 2019.

Current staffing locations and tiers may be found in the appendix of the [Service Delivery Policy](#).

Updates to Tiers & Coverage Standards

Periodically, the MBTA will reevaluate all stations and locations, and will make adjustments to tier designations to reflect changes to a station's characteristics. During this reevaluation, the MBTA will additionally evaluate further expansion of minimum staffing coverage standards for each tier.

A full reevaluation will occur whenever the Authority enters into a new contract, contract renegotiation, or contract extension with the vendor responsible for in-station customer service operations or should the MBTA discontinue use of contracted services for in-station customer service staff.

Outside of a full reevaluation of all locations, the MBTA may, on occasion, make interim changes to staffing at specific locations if:

- A station becomes accessible
- A station undergoes renovation or reconstruction that substantially alters characteristics used to determine tier allocation (e.g. new elevators, station entrance, fare gates)
- A new safety, operational, or accessibility concern is documented and determined to warrant staffing changes
- The demand for in-station customer service is expected to grow due to increased ridership or changes to the local area that are projected to result in higher station usage by older adults and riders with disabilities

Any interim changes shall be formalized in the next full reevaluation of staffing locations.

In the event of a permanent change to station service hours of at least one hour, the MBTA shall reevaluate minimum staffing coverage for each tier and shall endeavor to maintain the percentage of covered hours relative to service hours.

Coverage During Breaks & Absences

Staff breaks occur in 15- and 30-minute increments throughout station staff shifts, as required by law and contracts. Breaks are covered by supplemental staff at Tier I locations determined to have the highest need for customer service, however the majority of locations do not have coverage during breaks.

When in-station staff are unavailable for all, or some of, their assigned shift (for example, due to illness) at Tier I locations, the MBTA and its contractors may temporarily move staff from other locations to cover the absence. Whenever feasible, staff will be moved from Tier II locations to cover absences at Tier I locations. The Authority may also temporarily reallocate staff to support short term operational needs such as an elevator outage, a diversion, or a special event.

Staffing minimums do not exempt break time, partially covered shifts, nor absences. These gaps in coverage are measured and reported as unstaffed time when assessing actual staffing coverage compared to minimum standards, regardless of contractual agreements that may allow such gaps in coverage.

Station Closures

Minimum staffing standards are not applied when stations are closed to the public during service hours that are normally staffed, regardless of closure reason. The station or location may still receive station staff coverage to support riders, for example, to assist riders to access alternative transportation.

Staffing coverage for locations closed during normal revenue hours is determined on a case-by-case basis depending upon the nature of the closure. For planned station closures where alternative service is provided, the Alternative Service and Customer & Employee Experience Teams determines and fulfills staffing needs, typically with a combination of regular dedication station staff (TA's and CSA's), contracted customer service staff, and MBTA operational employees hired from other job categories into temporary customer service roles.

When stops/stations are closed due to unplanned reasons, such as due to emergencies, staffing decisions are made by operational leadership overseeing the MBTA response to the event.

Rider Assistance at Unstaffed Locations

The MBTA recognizes that riders will require assistance at times and/or locations when no dedicated in-station staff are present. In these cases, and when riders are unable to locate a staff member, there are several operational procedures and policies in place.

Riders may request assistance from the Motorperson or Bus Operator of the next vehicle servicing the station. If the Bus Operator or Motorperson is unable to personally assist, they are required to notify the Operations Control Center to arrange for another employee to be dispatched to provide assistance.

Riders may also use a station call box to request assistance. Call boxes are located throughout the lobby and platform levels of all heavy rail stations, at bus rapid transit stations, and non-surface level light rail stations. When a rider's request for assistance is submitted through a call box, it is relayed to the respective Line Dispatcher via a Hub Station Access Clerk. The Line Dispatcher then determines where the nearest in-station staff member is located and dispatches them to the rider's location to provide the assistance they require.

Measurement and Reporting

The MBTA's commitment to station staffing is codified in the MBTA's [Service Delivery Policy](#), and performance is reported on annually in the Service Delivery Report.

Feedback

For questions and feedback related to our Station Staffing Policies, please contact [Customer Support](#).